



# *Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission*

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 6, 2000

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### **ASMFC Schedules Public Meetings on Scup & Black Sea Bass Emergency Rules: *Meetings to be Held in RI, NY, DC and VA***

Washington, DC – The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission announced today that it will be holding four public meetings on the emergency actions of its Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board for scup and black sea bass fisheries. The public meetings will be conducted in Rhode Island, New York, the District of Columbia and Virginia. The specific details of those meetings follow:

**September 19, 2000, 5:00 PM\***

New York Dept. of Environmental Conservation  
Bureau of Marine Resources  
205 N. Belle Meade Road  
East Setauket, New York  
Contact: John Mason, (631)444-0452

**\*Meeting will begin immediately following the  
Marine Resources Advisory Council Meeting**

**September 20, 2000, 5:00 PM**

Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission  
1444 Eye Street, NW  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC  
Contact: Robert Beal, (202)289-6400

**September 26, 2000, Noon**

Virginia Marine Resources Commission  
Fourth Floor Conference Room  
2600 Washington Avenue  
Newport News, Virginia  
Contact: Jack Travelstead, (757)247-2247

**September 26, 2000, 6:00 PM**

Rhode Island Department of Environmental  
Management  
Narragansett Town Hall  
25 Fifth Avenue  
Narragansett, Rhode Island  
Contact: April Valliere, (401)782-4753

On August 14 & 15, 2000, the Commission's Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass Management Board, in consultation with the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, approved two emergency actions that impact the scup Winter II period fishery and this year's Fourth Quarter black sea bass fishery, as well as all four quarters of the 2001 fishery.

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The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (Commission) was formed by the 15 Atlantic coastal states in 1942 for the promotion and protection of coastal fishery resources. The Commission serves as a deliberative body of the Atlantic coastal states, coordinating the conservation and management of nearshore fishery resources, including marine, shell and anadromous species.

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## **Scup**

The Scup Emergency Action reduces the commercial possession limit for the Winter II period to 500 pounds. The action further reduces the Winter II possession limit to 200 pounds when 50 percent of the Winter II period quota is projected to be taken.

The Board's actions are a direct result of the states' desire to stay within the established 107,000-pound commercial harvest quota for the scup Winter II period fishery, which occurs in November and December of 2000. The original possession limit had been set at 4,000 pounds. The Board intends, through the more restrictive possession limits, to be able to more accurately project landings, while providing for a more equitable distribution of the quota throughout the entire Winter II period. It is also hoped that these measures will prevent adverse impacts associated with increased discards of legal-sized fish during closures, which would be implemented once Winter II quota is projected to be taken.

Scup is jointly managed by the Commission, through its Scup Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and the Council, through Amendment 8 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP. These plans manage the commercial scup fishery through a quota that is divided among three periods – Winter I (January – April), Summer (May – October), and Winter II (November – December). Commercial scup landings are monitored weekly to ensure the timely closure of the fisheries once the quota for each period is landed. Both plans set out a series of trip limits that are designed to extend the quota throughout the quota period, thereby, maximizing the benefits of the available quota.

## **Black Sea Bass**

The Black Sea Bass Emergency Action establishes a 2,000 pound commercial possession limit for the fourth quarter of this year (October 1 – December 31), with a reduction to a 1,000 pound possession limit when 50 percent of the quota is projected to be taken.

For the 2001 commercial black sea bass fishery, the Board established quarterly possession limits of 9,000 pounds (January - March), 1,500 pounds (April - June), 1,000 pounds (July - September), and 2,000 pounds (October – December). Additionally, the Board approved a trigger mechanism to reduce the quarterly possession limits once the projected harvest for each quarter reaches a certain level. The trigger level for the first quarter has been set at 75 percent. For the second, third and fourth quarters that trigger level has been set at 50 percent. Within a specific quarter once the trigger is projected to be met, and it appears that the full quarterly allocation will be taken, the possession limit is reduced by either half or three-quarters. The primary reason for these actions is to maintain the integrity of the black sea bass conservation program, while allowing for the fullest utilization of the resource by fishermen year-round.

Black Sea Bass is jointly managed by the Commission, through its Black Sea Bass Fishery Management Plan (FMP), and the Council, through Amendment 9 to the Summer Flounder, Scup and Black Sea Bass FMP. These plans manage the commercial black sea bass fishery through a quota that is divided among four periods – Quarter I (January – March), Quarter II (April – June), Quarter III (July – September), and Quarter IV (October - December). Commercial black sea bass landings are monitored weekly to ensure the timely closure of the fisheries once the quota for each period is landed. Both plans set out a series of trip limits that are designed to extend the quota throughout the quota period, thereby, maximizing the benefits of the available quota.

Copies of the Emergency Rules can be obtained via the Commission's webpage at [www.asmfc.org](http://www.asmfc.org) or by contacting Vanessa Jones, Administrative Assistant, at (202)289-6400 or [vjones@asmfc.org](mailto:vjones@asmfc.org). For more information, please contact either Robert Beal or Heather Stirratt at (202)289-6400.